

**NOTICE OF PROBABLE VIOLATION
and
PROPOSED COMPLIANCE ORDER**

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL TO: daniel.rifenburgh@rva.gov

May 8, 2025

Mr. Daniel Rifenburgh
Director
Richmond Gas Works
City of Richmond
400 Richmond Highway
Richmond, Virginia 23224

CPF 1-2025-006-NOPV

Dear Mr. Rifenburgh:

On May 10, 2023, an inspector from the Virginia State Corporation Commission, Division of Pipeline Safety (VA SCC), acting as an agent for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), pursuant to Chapter 601 of 49 United States Code (U.S.C.), inspected the City of Richmond's (City) pipeline facilities in Richmond, Virginia.

As a result of the inspection, it is alleged that you have committed probable violations of the Pipeline Safety Regulations, Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The items inspected and the probable violations are:

1. **§ 192.605 Procedural manual for operations, maintenance, and emergencies.**
 - (a) ***General.*** Each operator shall prepare and follow for each pipeline, a manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities and for emergency response. For transmission lines, the manual must also include procedures for handling abnormal operations. This manual must be reviewed and updated by the operator at intervals not exceeding 15 months, but at least once each calendar year. This manual must be prepared before operations of a pipeline system commence. Appropriate parts of the manual must be kept at locations where operations and maintenance activities are conducted.

The City failed to follow for each pipeline, a manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities and for emergency response in accordance with § 192.605(a). Specifically, the City failed to follow the manufacturer's instructions, which required proper support and anchor restraints, when installing fittings in accordance with chapter 3, section II in its *Natural Gas Procedures Manual*, dated 2/1/2020.

The City's procedures stated that manufacturer's instructions and procedures must be followed when installing fittings. The City installed a 12-inch Dresser Style 63 Type 1 expansion coupling. The manufacturer's procedures (Dresser) stated, in part, that "[d]uring assembly and testing operations proper support and anchor restraint must be provided. Failure to properly anchor could result in escaping line content and could cause property damage, serious injury or death." However, the City failed to install support or anchor restraints during assembly and testing of the Dresser expansion coupling.

The City performed radiographic inspection and soap test inspection of the new expansion joint. However, the City failed to ensure installation of the Dresser expansion coupling complied with manufacturer requirements. Approximately an hour and a half after gas was resupplied and work completed, the City received notification of a natural gas leak. The City determined that the Dresser expansion coupling failed and separated into two individual parts due to improper installation (i.e., an unrestrained coupling).

Therefore, the City failed to follow for each pipeline, a manual of written procedures for conducting operations and maintenance activities and for emergency response in accordance with § 192.605(a).

2. § 192.805 Qualification Program

Each operator shall have and follow a written qualification program. The program shall include provisions to:

(a)...

(h) After December 16, 2004, provide training, as appropriate to ensure that individuals performing covered tasks have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the tasks in a manner that ensures the safe operation of pipeline facilities; and

The City failed to provide training, as appropriate to ensure that individuals performing covered tasks have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the tasks in a manner that ensures the safe operations of pipeline facilities in accordance with § 192.805(h). Specifically, the City failed to provide training for the installation of special fittings, such as the Dresser Style 63 Type 1 expansion coupling.

The City installed a 12-inch Dresser Style 63 Type 1 expansion coupling. During the inspection, the inspector requested training records, including records for joining pipe. However, training for the covered task - joining pipe, which took place on 10/26/2022, 1/24/2023, & 1/31/2023, failed to include training on the installation of special fittings such as Dresser Style 63 Type 1 expansion joint. Therefore, individuals performing this covered task (joining pipe with a Dresser Style 63

Type 1 expansion joint) did not have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the task in a manner that ensures the safe operation of pipeline facilities.

The lack of requisite training resulted in a release of natural gas due to improper installation of the Dresser expansion coupling.

Therefore, the City failed to provide training, as appropriate to ensure that individuals performing covered tasks have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the tasks in a manner that ensures the safe operations of pipeline facilities in accordance with § 192.805(h)

Proposed Civil Penalty

We have reviewed the circumstances and supporting documents involved in this case, and have decided not to propose a civil penalty assessment at this time.

Proposed Compliance Order

With respect to Items 1 and 2, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 60118, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration proposes to issue a Compliance Order to City of Richmond. Please refer to the *Proposed Compliance Order*, which is enclosed and made a part of this Notice.

Response to this Notice

Enclosed as part of this Notice is a document entitled *Response Options for Pipeline Operators in Enforcement Proceedings*. Please refer to this document and note the response options. All material you submit in response to this enforcement action may be made publicly available. If you believe that any portion of your responsive material qualifies for confidential treatment under 5 U.S.C. § 552(b), along with the complete original document you must provide a second copy of the document with the portions you believe qualify for confidential treatment redacted and an explanation of why you believe the redacted information qualifies for confidential treatment under 5 U.S.C. § 552(b).

Following your receipt of this Notice, you have 30 days to respond as described in the enclosed *Response Options*. If you do not respond within 30 days of receipt of this Notice, this constitutes a waiver of your right to contest the allegations in this Notice and authorizes the Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety to find facts as alleged in this Notice without further notice to you and to issue a Final Order. If you are responding to this Notice, we propose that you submit your correspondence to my office within 30 days from receipt of this Notice. The Region Director may extend the period for responding upon a written request timely submitted demonstrating good cause for an extension.

In your correspondence on this matter, please refer to **CPF 1-2025-006-NOPV** and, for each document you submit, please provide a copy in electronic format whenever possible.

Sincerely,

Robert Burrough
Director, Eastern Region, Office of Pipeline Safety
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

Enclosures: *Proposed Compliance Order*
Response Options for Pipeline Operators in Enforcement Proceedings

PROPOSED COMPLIANCE ORDER

Pursuant to 49 United States Code § 60118, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) proposes to issue to City of Richmond (City) a Compliance Order incorporating the following remedial requirements to ensure the compliance of the City with the pipeline safety regulations:

- A. In regard to Item 1 of the Notice pertaining to the failure to follow procedures during installation of a 12-inch expansion coupling, the City must, within **90** days of receipt of the Final Order, develop and implement a training program focused on special fittings such as Dresser Style. City gas utility construction and maintenance personnel shall be trained with the updated content and requalified for the covered task.
- B. In regard to Item 2 of the Notice pertaining to the failure to ensure training of covered tasks provided necessary knowledge and skills, the City must update its Operator Qualification training program to specifically include training on the installation of restraining and non-restraining expansion couplings, including special fittings such as Dresser Style 63 and provide the updated training program to the Director, Eastern Region, within **90** days of receipt of the Final Order.
- C. It is requested (not mandated) that City of Richmond maintain documentation of the safety improvement costs associated with fulfilling this Compliance Order and submit the total to Robert Burrough, Director, Eastern Region, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. It is requested that these costs be reported in two categories: 1) total cost associated with preparation/revision of plans, procedures, studies and analyses, and 2) total cost associated with replacements, additions and other changes to pipeline infrastructure.